

ODEP/National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)

Alliance Report/July 17, 2013 – July 17, 2015

I. Alliance Background

Date Signed: July 17, 2013

This report describes the purpose, scope of the Alliance between the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), a list of the team members and contributors, events, products of the ODEP/NASWA Alliance, and results achieved.

Overview

Summary of the Purpose of the ODEP/NASWA Alliance

NASWA is an organization of state administrators of unemployment insurance laws, employment services, training programs, employment statistics and labor market information. NASWA aims to strengthen the workforce system through information exchange, liaison, and advocacy.

ODEP and the NASWA recognized the value of establishing a collaborative relationship to promote the employment of people with disabilities.

Specifically, ODEP and NASWA agreed to work together to carry out the following activities:

- Participate in workgroups, committees, conferences and other venues to engage in discussions and share information aimed at promoting employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- Obtain feedback from NASWA members, affiliates, and partners including the DirectEmployers Association (DE) on ODEP programs, policy initiatives, resources and methods of outreach to ensure that they are effective and useful from the perspective of the workforce investment system and employers in facilitating the recruitment, hiring, retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities.
- Provide professional development, training and technical assistance support to NASWA staff, members, affiliates, partners and others including employers on ODEP initiatives and resources.

- Collaborate to disseminate information to NASWA members, affiliates, partners and others on ODEP tools and resources, initiatives and research in disability employment policy.
- Participate in meetings and/or discussions with representatives from other ODEP Alliances to exchange information on disability employment issues and explore opportunities for additional collaborative activities.

Implementation Team Members

ODEP Members: Serena Lowe (Senior Policy Advisor, Workforce System Policy Team and Alliance Coordinator), Shaun McGill (Policy Advisor, Employer Policy Team)

ODEP Contributors: Christopher Button, Policy Advisor Team Lead, Workforce System Policy and Carol Dunlap, Business Development Specialist, Policy, Communication and Outreach Team.

NASWA Members: Bob Simoneau, Deputy Executive Director and Don Wehbey, Labor Market Information Director

NASWA Contributors: Pam Gerassimides, NASWA Assistant Executive Director and NLx Director

Note: ODEP Policy Team staff across all four policy teams and leadership from ODEP's Research & Evaluation team were invited to attend meetings held at ODEP.

Evaluation Period

This report covers the period: July 17, 2013-July 17, 2015.

II. Implementation Team Meetings

Meetings

7.17.13	Alliance signing
7.30.13	Kick-Off Implementation Team Meeting
1.29.14	Alliance Meeting
4.28.15	Alliance Meeting

III. Outcomes

YEARS I and II

ODEP collaborates with NASWA and its National TA Centers in disseminating technical resources to NASWA's members on implementation strategies with respect to 503 Final Rule.

- 7.30.13 During this get acquainted meeting, multiple topics were discussed including new NASWA officers, Employment First, customized employment, employer engagement, the DirectEmployer Association and a recent VETS conference.
- 10.30.13 Jennifer Sheehy and LEAD Center speaking at the National Meeting on EEO Compliance that NASWA hosted in collaboration with CRC in the Great Hall on October 30-November 1.
- Fall 2013 ODEP engages NASWA in accessing and collecting examples of effective practices and innovative strategies executed by state workforce investment agencies and their respective partners in implementing the objectives behind Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act (now reauthorized as the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act).
- 2013-14 ODEP Staff Christopher Button and Serena Lowe, along with the LEAD Center, address NASWA EO Committee members during their quarterly meeting.
- 1.29.14 Items discussed during this meeting included 503 implementation, EO projects, ways that NASWA could disseminate information on ODEP resources and ways to determine what resources would be useful to NASWA members.
- Spring 2014 In addition to the ODEP NASWA Implementation, team, the meeting was expanded to include representatives from ETA and OFCCP as the focus of this meeting was on the development of an interim outreach plan that comprised of key activities and responsibilities the Department of Labor and NASWA would implement to assure the workforce investment system was provided information on strategies and effective practices related to connecting employers that are Federal contractors with jobseekers with disabilities and given additional technical resources to meet other requirements laid out in the newly released 503 final rule.
- 4.28.15 A meeting of the ODEP NASWA Implementation Team was held on April 28, 2015. WIOA, LEAD Center webinars and tools, Employment First, ADA 25th Anniversary, EO issues, Veterans with disabilities and 503 were among the topics discussed. Given the strong collaborative work NASWA is engaged with both OFCCP and ETA on with respect to WIOA implementation and continued roll-out of the final rule on Section 503, both ODEP and NASWA agreed that a larger strategic discussion about how best to coordinate various efforts between NASWA and the various divisions of

DOL in the future would be a good idea in order to maximize limited staff resources and communications.

- 7.30.15 ODEP participates in NASWA's annual EO Technical Assistance Meeting in Washington DC. Serena Lowe conducts presentation and facilitates dialogue with participants on strategies for engaging workforce investment systems into state Employment First efforts. In the afternoon, Christopher Button and staff from the LEAD Center participate on a panel with representatives from ETA and CRC regarding the release of the Section 188 Disability Guide. Then, the panel continues with a longer open forum on Federal policy issues of interest to the participants.

IV. Beyond the Alliance

ODEP and NASWA will continue to communicate and work together on policy goals of mutual interest and information dissemination strategies with respect to WIOA and 503 Final Rule implementation, release of the new Section 188 Disability Guide, engaging the workforce investment system in state Employment First efforts, and ongoing promotion of effective practices for the workforce investment system related to supporting jobseekers with disabilities find and sustain competitive, integrated employment. A Memorandum of Understanding between both organizations may be considered going forward in order to allow greater flexibility in building and meeting joint goals.